

NORTH AMERICAN

WETLANDS

CONSERVATION ACT

# project flash

## South Dakota Partnership Receives \$50,000 for Wetlands Project

On June 9, 2004, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council reported to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission that it had approved **\$50,000** in funding under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act's Small Grants Program for the **Snatch Creek Acquisition Project** in **South Dakota's Bon Homme County** in **Congressional District 1**. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop and implement wetlands and associated uplands conservation projects to benefit wildlife. Projects must meet certain biological criteria to be considered for funding, and partners must be able to match the grant request 1:1 with nonfederal funds.

With less than 1 percent of the Nation's original tallgrass prairie remaining, this habitat type is among the most endangered ecosystems in North America. As much as 35 percent of South Dakota's prairie pothole wetlands have been lost primarily to agricultural development. These habitats provide stopover areas for a multitude of bird species in the **Central Flyway**, many of which are in severe population decline.

The overall goal of this project is to permanently protect and restore more than 300 contiguous acres of wetlands and uplands habitats in the Snatch Creek project area. In December of 2002, Pheasants Forever, Inc., initiated the project by purchasing 160 acres. This quarter-section includes nearly 1 mile of permanent stream, three pothole wetlands, and uplands. Restoration work was carried out on the tract in spring 2003 and 2004, affecting some 94 acres of habitat.

Recently, Pheasants Forever agreed to purchase an 80-acre tract adjacent to the quarter-section. This tract includes an 11-acre wetland, 6 acres of Clear Lake, including 1,550 feet of shoreline, and 3 acres of a 16-acre wetland. Pheasants Forever also has begun negotiations to purchase another 80 acres adjacent to this property, protecting the remaining 13 acres of the 16-acre wetland, plus three small pothole wetlands and their associated uplands.

Partners Pheasants Forever and South Dakota Department of Fish Game and Parks (Department) will use their grant and **\$170,247** in matching funds to restore the hydrology and hydric vegetation on 20 acres of wetlands and to restore 60 acres of tallgrass prairie nesting habitat on the acquired tracts. The Department will hold title to the properties and will manage them to provide nesting, brood-rearing, and migratory habitat for species such as northern pintail, mallard, redhead, lesser scaup, willet, marbled godwit, American bittern, grasshopper and Henslow's sparrows, northern harrier, Swainson's hawk, short-eared owl. Their accomplishments also will advance the habitat and waterfowl conservation goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Prairie Pothole Joint Venture**.

For more information about this project, contact Ron Leathers, Pheasants Forever, Inc., [leathers@sio.midco.net](mailto:leathers@sio.midco.net), (605) 695-1230, or Keith Morehouse, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, [keith\\_morehouse@fws.gov](mailto:keith_morehouse@fws.gov), (703) 358-1784.

DIVISION OF BIRD HABITAT  
CONSERVATION  
NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS  
CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
4401 NORTH FAIRFAX DRIVE  
MAIL STOP 4075  
ARLINGTON, VA 22203  
[birdhabitat.fws.gov](http://birdhabitat.fws.gov) • 703/358-1784

